



Herman Selderhuis and Karla Apperloo-Boersma, *Power of Faith: 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), 2013.

Readers of this impressive volume will be very much delighted by the quality of the writing and the quality of the illustrations. Indeed, both can honestly be denoted ‘lush’.

First, concerning the illustrations, each page has multiple examples of fine art and photographs of historical documents and literature. No stone has been left unturned, it seems, in order to offer illustrative material for persons, places, and things.

There are several reasons for this but the chief of which is that there was an exhibition celebrating the 450th anniversary of the Catechism at the *Paleis Het Loo Nationaal Museum* and many of the items on display there have been cataloged here in Part III of the present volume. Here are a few samples of the brilliant artwork which adorns the book-



Second, concerning content, readers will learn volumes from the papers presented in Parts I-III. These papers cover the following subjects:

Part I- History and Theology of the Heidelberg Catechism; The Palatinate, Heidelberg, and the Heidelberg Catechism; and The Heidelberg Catechism in the Netherlands.

Part II- 450 Years of the Heidelberg Catechism- Works Exhibited in the Heidelberg City Museum.

Part III- The House of Orange and Religion Exhibition Within the Context of the 450th Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism, 1563-2013.

Part IV- Appendices.

Part I is the portion of the volume which contains most of the essays proper, with the other parts being mostly occupied with serving as museum exhibition catalogs. These essays include, but are not limited to Herman Selderhuis's preparatory "From Heidelberg, Through Emden, and into the whole world"; Lyle Bierma's "The origins of the threefold structure of the Heidelberg Catechism: Another look"; and most brilliantly, Peter Opitz's "The Heidelberg Catechism: Swiss Roots, Swiss Impact". And many others.

Here, for instance, is the introductory sentence of Opitz's essay-

In April 1563, shortly after the composition of the Heidelberg Catechism, Caspar Olevianus wanted to be certain that John Calvin and Theodore Beza in Geneva, as well as the antistes of the Zurich church, Heinrich Bullinger, would receive a copy (p. 61).

He then goes on to discuss the *Sitz im Leben* of the document in the Swiss Reformed Cantons and he concludes with some observations on the theological influence of the Swiss Reformation on the Catechism itself.

These essays provide readers with sufficient information such that anyone wishing to know about the roots, history, impact, and lasting significance of this document will be better informed than most and, in my view more importantly, more appreciative of it.

The Heidelberg Catechism has done as much to form Reformed theology as any other Catechism or Confession. It remains one of the most useful tools for instruction and magnificently summarizes Reformed belief.

Given the relative brevity of the catechism, then, and the length of the present volume (over 450 pages), it would be thoroughly sensible to sit the Catechism beside *The Power of Faith* on one's shelves or nightstand and utilize the latter as a companion volume for the former. Students of the history of Christianity in general and of the Reformation in particular will enjoy the book.

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